

What is claimed is:

1. A method of providing organized recommendations and or advice to be used in the selection of objects based upon user-supplied profile information, a set of object characteristics, and a set of rules which have been formed by associating a set of variations of the object characteristics with a set of variations of input variables, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) assigning a value to represent the relationship between each associated variation of object characteristic and variation of input variable to form a prioritized rule set;

(b) analyzing the user-supplied profile information to select variations from the set of variations of input variables;

(c) applying the selected input variable variations to the prioritized rule set to obtain a reduced set of prioritized rules; and

(d) processing the reduced set of prioritized rules to generate categorized output characteristic values which represent the provided organized recommendations and or advice .

2. The method of claim 1 further including the step of selecting objects based upon the provided organized recommendations and or advice.

3. A method of providing fashion recommendations and or advice for selecting garments and accessories based upon user-supplied profile information, a set of object characteristics, and a set of rules which have been formed by associating a set of variations of the garment or accessory characteristics with a set of variations of input variables, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) assigning a value to represent the relationship between each associated variation of garment or accessory characteristic and variation of input variable to form a prioritized rule set;

(b) analyzing the user-supplied profile information to select variations from the set of variations of input variables;

(c) applying the selected input variable variations to the prioritized rule set to obtain a reduced set of prioritized rules; and

(d) processing the reduced set of prioritized rules to generate categorized output characteristic values which represent the provided fashion recommendations and or advice .

4. A method of specifying characteristics of objects based upon user-supplied profile information, a set of object characteristics, and a set of rules which have been formed by associating a set of variations of the object characteristics with a set of variations of input variables, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) assigning a value to represent the relationship between each associated variation of object characteristic and variation of input variable to form a prioritized rule set;

(b) analyzing the user-supplied profile information to select variations from the set of variations of input variables;

(c) applying the selected input variable variations to the prioritized rule set to obtain a reduced set of prioritized rules; and

(d) processing the reduced set of prioritized rules to generate categorized output characteristic values which represent the specified object characteristics.

5. A method of forming criteria for selecting objects out of an inventory of available objects based upon user-supplied profile information, a set of object characteristics, and a set of rules which have been formed by associating a set of feasible variations of the object characteristics with a set of feasible variations of input variables, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) assigning a value to represent the relationship between each associated feasible variation of object characteristic and feasible variation of input variable to form a prioritized rule set;

(b) assigning a weight to each variation in the set of feasible variations of input variables;

(c) analyzing the user-supplied profile information to select variations from the set of feasible variations of input variables;

(d) selecting rules from the prioritized rule set which are associated with the selected input variable variations to form a reduced set of prioritized rules; and

(e) processing the reduced set of prioritized rules to generate categorized output characteristic values which represent the criteria for selecting objects.

6. A method for selecting objects from an inventory of objects, each object being described by a set of characteristics and by a value for each characteristic in the set of characteristics, wherein for a particular object the assigned values of the characteristics for that particular object are descriptive thereof, the method comprising the steps of

(a) forming a set of desired characteristic values;

(b) creating a branched path search schema as a function of the desired characteristic values, output characteristic passing criteria, and supplied search order criteria;

(c) evaluating objects from the inventory of available objects according to the branched path search schema; and

(d) ranking the evaluated objects according to how well the object traversed the branched path search schema.

7. The method of claim 6 wherein each characteristic in the set of characteristics has a plurality of feasible values, and the step of creating a branched path search schema comprises the steps of

(a) placing the characteristics from the set of characteristics in a sequence using the supplied search order criteria; and

(b) for each of the sequenced characteristics, applying the output characteristic passing criteria to the corresponding values for the sequenced characteristic, whereby characteristic values which do not satisfy the passing criteria are removed from the branched path search schema for that sequenced characteristic.

8. A method for selecting objects out of an inventory of available objects based upon user-supplied profile information, a set of object characteristics, a set of rules, and comprising the steps of:

(a) identifying object characteristics and variations thereof and input variables which are related to possible user profile information;

(b) formulating a set of rules in an n-dimensional array whose indices are the object characteristics and variations thereof and input variables, and whose element values represent the relationship between these indices;

(c) obtaining user profile information;

(d) applying the user profile information to select a reduced set of input variable indices, which in turn select a reduced set of rules;

(e) processing the element values from the reduced set of rules to generate categorized output characteristic values;

(f) generating an individualized branched path search schema as a function of the categorized output characteristic values, output characteristic passing criteria, and supplied search order criteria;

(g) evaluating objects from the inventory of available objects according to the branched path search schema; and

(h) ranking the evaluated objects according to how well the object traversed the branched path.